

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: EUR/RPM:JHMADKEN:PF

APPROVED BY: EUR:REWING

EUR/RPM:HAHOLMES

S/S-O:AOTTO

----- 016445

O 022304Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 023432

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 023432 ACTION AMMAN INFO MADRID
RABAT ALGIERS NOUAKCHOTT 30 JAN

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 023432

EXDIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MO, SP, MU, SS, JO

SUBJECT:TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN -- MOROCCO AND MILITARY AID

REF: AMMAN 0389

1. YOU MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING IN RESPONDING TO KING
HUSSEIN'S INQUIRY REPORTED REFTEL.

2. UPDATE ON FIGHTING: POLISARIO FRONT CONTINUES TO
INFLECT LOSSES ON MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN FORCES AND

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CIVILIANS; LAND MINES AND AMBUSHES OF MOROCCAN PATROLS HAVE

BEEN PARTICULARLY DAMAGING FORM OF ATTACK. PHOSPHATE CONVEYOR ALSO REPORTED DAMAGED BY GUERRILLAS. MOROCCANS ARE INTENSIFYING THEIR ANTI-GUERRILLA CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE POCKETS OF RESISTANCE IN DESERT OUTPOSTS AND, IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO, MOROCCAN TROOPS AND AIR SUPPORT ALSO ASSISTING MAURITANIANS. GOM CLAIMS TO CONTROL MAJOR POPULATION AREAS AND ONLY TOWN OF CONSEQUENCE STILL UNDER CONTROL OF POLISARIO IS MAHBES IN EXTREME NORTHEAST SAHARA CLOSE TO ALGERIAN BORDER. COL. DLIMI, GOM'S MILITARY CHIEF IN SAHARA, TOLD NEWSMEN LAST WEEK THAT GOM CONTENT TO LEAVE MAHBES IN POLISARIO HANDS FOR TIME BEING.

3. WE HAVE RECEIVED CONFLICTING REPORTS ON DEGREE AND NATURE OF GOM AIR FORCE INVOLVEMENT IN FIGHTING. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT MOROCCAN F-5A WAS DOWNED IN OR NEAR MAURITANIA ALTHOUGH GIRM HAS SO FAR NOT REPORTED FINDING THE WRECKAGE ON ITS TERRITORY. GOM ASSERTS VARIOUSLY THAT PLANE WAS DOWNED BY SA-6 OR SA-7, MAKING POINT THAT POLISARIO USE OF SA-6 WOULD SHOW INTERFERENCE BY OUTSIDE ELEMENTS, SINCE THE POLISARIO GUERRILLAS LACK SKILL AND TRAINING TO USE THIS WEAPON. THERE IS ISOLATED SPANISH NEWS AGENCY EUROPA REPORT THAT CUBANS AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE TRAINING GUERRILLAS BUT ARE NOT ENGAGED IN FIGHTING AGAINST MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN SOLDIERS. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT CUBANS OR NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE INVOLVED IN ANY WAY, NOR HAVE WE EVIDENCE THAT GOA HAS SOUGHT DIRECT SOVIET AID FOR THEIR OPERATIONS INVOLVING THE SAHARA.

4. WITH CONTRADICTORY CLAIMS FROM ALL SIDES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT MILITARY SITUATION IN SAHARA. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS GOM HAS MAINTAINED ITS LOSSES HAVE BEEN LIGHT AND THEY CONSIDER GUERRILLAS LITTLE MORE THAN NUISANCE. HOWEVER, MOROCCO MIGHT BE IN MORE CRITICAL POSITION IF ALGERIA CHOSE TO SUPPORT PROLONGED POLISARIO GUERRILLA STRUGGLE AGAINST GOM/GIRM. INITIATE HOSTILITIES AGAINST EACH OTHER, AND MOST OBSERVERS HAVE TENDED TO BELIEVE THAT GOA WILL RESTRICT ITSELF TO MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO, ANTI-MOROCCAN PROPAGANDA, AND POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN DISSIDENTS. HOWEVER, ALGERIAN PRESS SERVICE JAN. 27 ANNOUNCED THAT
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MOROCCAN ARMY HAD ATTACKED ALGERIAN ARMY FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLY UNIT NORTH OF LA GUELTA. GOM CONTENTS UNIT COMPOSED OF UNIFORMED ALGERIAN REGULARS ENTRENCHED IN AREA 200 KMS FROM ALGERIAN BORDER. IS BELIEVED TO BE FIRST CONTACT BETWEEN GOM AND GOA REGULAR FORCES IN SAHARAN CONTEXT.

5. MOROCCAN EQUIPMENT LOSSES: WE HAVE NO RELIABLE INFORMATION, ASIDE FROM REPORT OF LOSS OF F-5 MENTIONED

ABOVE AND CRASH ON TAKE-OFF OF C-119 WHICH WAS DESTROYED. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS REPORTS OF VEHICLES CARRYING MOROCCAN SOLDIERS WHICH HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY MINES, BUT NO DETAILS ON ARMS OR OTHER EQUIPMENT WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN LOST OR CAPTURED.

6. GOM HAS APPROACHED USG REQUESTING THAT DELIVERY OF NEARLY ALL ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR MOROCCO UNDER FMS AND COMMERCIAL SALES PROGRAMS BE EXPEDITED. THIS REQUEST NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION. MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE THAT A) MANUFACTURERS UNABLE SPEED UP DELIVERIES BECAUSE OF PRODUCTION LIMITATIONS; B) IF SPECIAL EFFORT MADE TO SATISFY GOM

NEEDS IT MIGHT HAVE TO BE AT COST OF POSTPONING PROMISED DELIVERIES TO OTHER FRIENDLY STATES; C) MOST ITEMS CANNOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM U.S. MILITARY INVENTORIES WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING OUR OWN MILITARY READINESS. REQUESTS FOR TRANSFER OF MILITARY ITEMS OF U.S. ORIGIN FROM THIRD COUNTRIES TO MOROCCO WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS AND GOM, NOT RPT NOT USG, WOULD HAVE TO INITIATE REQUESTS TO THOSE THIRD COUNTRIES. USG IS PROCEEDING WITH NORMAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SALES PROGRAM TO UPGRADE GOM MILITARY CAPABILITIES WHICH ARE BELIEVED WEAK IN RELATION TO THOSE OF ALGERIA. KISSINGER UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE023432
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/RPM:JHMADKEN:PF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760039-0458
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760291/aaaadbyx.tel
Line Count: 141
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 AMMAN 389
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALK WITH KING HUSSEIN -- MOROCCO AND MILITARY AID
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MO, SP, MU, SS, JO, (HUSSEIN I)
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006